



# Northern Great Plains Network

## Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

July 2004



**Field Work:** The bird inventories are now completed (fish are the other completed taxa). The final report is due this December. Within the next month or so the mammal, herpetofauna, and plant inventories will be completed as well, and those reports are also due by December. The butterfly studies (they are not one of the required inventories) will be completed this summer as well. The field calendar for the investigators can be found at: <http://www1.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ngpn/index.htm>. (Keep in mind that these schedules are tentative; check with Dan Licht or the investigators for confirmation.)

**Water Quality Project:** The original intent of the water quality project was to make three field visits to each park this summer. However, due to equipment problems and the lingering drought it was decided to postpone the third and final visit until next summer. Dr. Troelstrup will share the results from this summer's effort in future newsletters.

**Satellite Imagery:** The Quickbird satellite imagery is in. This high resolution GIS data (0.6m black & white; 2.4m color) has been purchased for Devils Tower NM, Fort Laramie NHS, Fort Union Trading Post NHS, Jewel Cave NM, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, and Mount Rushmore NM. Parks interested in working with the data and/or having a large map should contact Joel Brumm. Joel is also pursuing the acquisition of historic imagery (from a variety of sources) for all parks in the Network.

**Vital Signs Planning:** I'm still optimistic of submitting Phase I (i.e., background, ecosystem models) of the Vital Signs plan this fall (this would be a year ahead of WASO's schedule). I will soon distribute a draft to the Technical Committee. The schedule for Phase II is contingent on FY05 funding. Phase II identifies our Vital Signs (a GPRA goal). WASO has several expectations for Phase II, some of which require an increase in funding (e.g., meetings with outside expertise and our partners).

**Ecological Society of America Conference:** Amy Symstad presented a poster at the Ecological Society of America conference. The poster – co-authored by Amy and Dan Licht – described the Vital Signs program and the challenges and opportunities in monitoring vegetation across 13 national park units. The poster will (soon) be on the Network web page (<http://www1.nature.nps.gov/im/units/ngpn/index.htm>).

**Miscellaneous:** I'll try and wrap up each newsletter with an interesting highlight. For this month it is the discovery of several new county records of butterflies found in the museum at Knife River Indian Villages NHS. While making a scoping visit to the park, Dr. Ron Royer (who is conducting the butterfly inventory at the park) was shown a display of voucher specimens caught in the early 1990s. Several of the specimens were new records for the country and were not included in the recently completed "Butterflies of North Dakota" (Royer 2003). Hopefully, the NPSpecies database will make the biological data from parks more accessible to researchers.